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The Dress Code for Muslim Women: A Linguistic Analysis of the Qurānic Verses and the Prophetic Traditions

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Abstract

It is not uncommon to find cases of Muslim women being harassed or bullied in many of the Muslim-minority countries because of their dress. These Islamophobic attacks, unfortunately, are not merely conducted by radicalised individuals; but the subjugation of the rights of Muslim women also comes from institutional bodies and governments. Secular nations, such as France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, Bulgaria, Switzerland, USA, UK, Canada, China, and Russia have either imposed restrictions on Muslim women regarding their dress code. They see veil as a non-acceptance of progressive or cumulative values which is unsurprisingly not welcomed by the Muslim community. In such environment, it is inevitable for the Muslims to understand what the Qur'ān and Sunnah really say about the dress code for Muslim women in order to explain what their religion really requires from them and to communicate it appropriately to the government officials, journalists, politicians, and other relevant stakeholders. It is also essential from the perspective of segregating cultural aspects from the religious aspects. Many of the commonly used words for the dressing of Muslim women are more rooted in culture than the religion. It is accordingly vital to understand what the Qur'ān and Sunnah really command about the women dressing and how it has been interpreted in various Islamic societies and cultures. This paper accordingly presents an analysis of all the relevant Qur'ānic verses and the prophetic traditions (from the 6 most renowned books of ahadith). The linguistic analysis employed in this paper results in the identification of items of dress that were worn by Muslim women to safeguard their modesty during the times of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). The same principles are relevant for today's

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age and time and the Muslims can use those guidelines to delineate cultural practices from the religious injunctions.

Keywords: *veil, burka, hijab, niqab, jilbab, chastity.*

Introduction:

Mutual respect and cooperation are the very building blocks of any multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society. It is, however, highly unfortunate that many of the nations which pride themselves in their approach towards integration and multiculturalism are unable to provide all members of society with the respect they for their culture and choices regarding what they wear and eat while fully abiding by the law of land. One such attempt to mock the local Muslim community and their dressing was made by the Australian senator Pauline Hanson who came to the parliament dressed in a Burqa to make fun of it.[1] Once she came out of the Burqa, he asked the house to ban this dress. This was a very unwelcome stunt from a politician who is well-known for her anti-Islam, anti-Muslim and racist stance.[2] The Attorney-General George Brandis answered adequately and clearly warned Pauline about not hurting the feelings of law-abiding Australian Muslims;[3] this event caused a gross dislike among the Muslim community. In Australia's case, the firm answer from the Attorney Journal endorsed the value this country places on the multi-culturalism. This is, unfortunately, not the case with many other countries that have either put restrictions on the clothing choices of Muslim women or are seriously considering doing so. This includes countries such as France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, Bulgaria, Switzerland, USA, UK, Canada, China, and Russia.

While being inclined to follow the Islamic commands regarding modesty and the prescribed dress-code on one-hand, and facing this trauma and labeling for their dress choices, on the other hand, Muslim youth, especially women, have to go through a traumatic experience. The situation is compounded by lack of knowledge about the authentic teachings of the Quran and Sunnah. These factors often become a source of great stress for the Muslims living in Western countries as a minority.

With the above context in mind, we have made an attempt through this paper to explore all the verses and all the ahadith related to the system of the veil in the Islamic faith. This analysis is expected to bring clarity on this topic and help Muslim women make informed decisions about their dressing and outlook. It should be noted that our analysis is mainly based on the Siha'ah As-Sitta (the six renowned books of hadith) and does not fully encompass other books of hadith. We are, however, highly confident that it captures the jist of prescribed code in relation to the topic under discussion and will provide valuable insights on the subject.

The Terms Used for Veil in the Qur'ān and Sunnah:

In this section, we will first present various verses from the Quran that deal with the concept of the veil. This will be followed by a summary of relevant Quranic injunctions.

a. Lowering the Gaze

The first and foremost form of the veil in Islam is our gaze. Allah SWT says (interpreted meaning):

> *"Enjoin the believing men to lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that is chaster for them. Surely Allah is well aware of their actions."*[4]

This requirement for lowering the gaze is not restricted to men alone. In the next ayah, Allah SWT commands (interpreted meaning):

> *"Likewise enjoin the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their modesty; not to display their beauty and ornaments except what normally appears thereof; let them draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their charms except to their husbands, their fathers, their fathers-in-law, their own sons, their stepsons, their own brothers, their nephews on either brothers' or sisters' sides, their own womenfolk, their own slaves, male attendants who lack sexual desires or small children who have no carnal knowledge of women. Also, enjoin them not to strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden trinkets. And O believers! Turn to Allah in repentance, all of you, about your past mistakes, so that you may attain salvation".*[5]

b. Hiding the adornments and using Khimar

While explaining the meaning of this verse, various mufassireen[6] have explained that there are two opinions about the meanings of words "except what normally appears thereof" (إِلاَّ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا). As per one of the opinions, which is considered to be held by Ibn Abbas R.A. and his followers is that it is permissible for women to have their face, hands, and feet uncovered when they are in front of the non-mahrams. While the other opinion is that only such beauty and adornments (including face) which become apparent without the intention (e.g; because of air getting in the clothing etc.), and their unintentional display is not a sin. This accordingly requires the face to be veiled too. This opinion is held by Abdullah bin Mas'ud R.A, Hasan Basri, Ibn Sirin and Ibrahim Nakha'i. According to Muhammad Asad, the explanation of these words is as follows:

> *"Although the traditional exponents of Islamic Law have for centuries been inclined to restrict the definition of "what may [decently] be apparent" to a woman's face, hands and feet- and sometimes even less than that - we may safely assume that the meaning of illa ma zahara minha is much wider and that the deliberate vagueness of this phrase is meant to allow for all the time-bound changes that are necessary for man's moral and social growth".*[7]

It is interesting to note that in the injunction of the covering the blossoms, the following words are used: "وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ". The use of the word 'Khumr' (same root as Khamr or Khimar) has been translated as 'veil' by most of the translators including Malik, Pickthal, Yusuf Ali, and others. Muhammad Asad has translated it as 'head cover'. Various dictionaries, including Lisaanul Arab and AlMunjid, also explain the meaning of this word

as a head-scarf. This word has also been translated in a broader meaning to mean a piece of cloth that is used for covering and can be used in different ways.[8] Many Muslim scholars, however, are of the opinion that Khimar does not mean anything else but the head-scarf. Explaining the context of this verse, Maulana Shabbir Ahmed Uthmani explains:

> *"In the days of Jahilliyah, women used to put the two ends of the khimar on their backs [rather than their fronts]. This accordingly left the shape of their bossoms exposed. This practice was done for the purpose of displaying their beauty. The Quran told that the practice [of Muslim women] should be that their scarf should be worn in such a way that it should cover their ears, neck, and chest in an appropriate manner".*[9]

With regards to the words جُيُوبِهِنّ, some of the modernists have tried to twist its meanings to interpret that covering the head is not mandatory.[10] This stance, however, has been thoroughly refuted by various scholars and researchers. For example, Tunio, Bhutto, and Soomro (2017)[11] have questioned this interpretation and presented a linguistic and logical explanation associated with the words 'juyub' and 'khimar'in order to refute this liberalist and modernist misinterpretation.

The words Khimar or Khimar is also used in a number of prophetic traditions. It is narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said:

"لاَ يَقْبَلُ اللَّهُ صَلاَةَ حَائِضٍ إِلاَّ بِخِمَارٍ"[12]

> *Allah does not accept the prayer of a woman who has reached puberty unless she wears a veil.*

In another hadith, it is mentioned:

"عَنْ عَائِشَةَ – رضى الله عنها – أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ يَرْحَمُ اللَّهُ نِسَاءَ الْمُهَاجِرَاتِ الأُوَلَ لَمَّا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ {وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ} شَقَّقْنَ أَكْنَفَ – قَالَ ابْنُ صَالِحٍ أَكْثَفَ- – مُرُوطِهِنَّ فَاخْتَمَرْنَ بِهَا"[13]

> *From Aisha R.A. May Allah have mercy on the early immigrant women. When the verse "That they should draw their veils over their bosoms" was revealed, they tore their thick outer garments and made veils from them.*

Another narration mentions:

"عَنْ فَاطِمَةَ بِنْتِ الْمُنْذِرِ، أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ كُنَّا نُخَمِّرُ وُجُوهَنَا وَنَحْنُ مُحْرِمَاتٌ وَنَحْنُ مَعَ أَسْمَاءَ بِنْتِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ الصِّدِّيقِ"[14]

> *Fatima bint al-Mundhir said, "We used to veil our faces when we were in ihram in the company of Asma bint Abi Bakr as-Siddiq."*

Many other narrations also mandate the use of khimar.[15]

c. Wearing Jilbab

Another dress for women which is mentioned in a number of prophetic traditions as requirements is Jilbab. In Surah Al-Ahzab, verse 59, Allah SWT asks prophet ﷺ to ask believing women to wear it:

> *"O Prophet! Tell thy wives and thy daughters, as well as all [other]*

believing women, that they should draw over themselves some of their outer garments (جَلَابِيبِهِنَّ) *[when in public]: this will be more conducive to their being recognized [as decent women] and not annoyed and Allah is Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful".*[16]

Tunio, Bhutto, and Soomro (2017) explain the word جَلَابِيبِ means the external garment for ladies which may or may not be stitched. The use of chador (Urdu: چادر) also stems from this verse.

We also see the usage of this word in the hadith:

"عَنْ أُمِّ عَطِيَّةَ، قَالَتْ أُمِرْنَا أَنْ نُخْرِجَ، الْحُيَّضَ يَوْمَ الْعِيدَيْنِ وَذَوَاتِ الْخُدُورِ، فَيَشْهَدْنَ جَمَاعَةَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَدَعْوَتَهُمْ، وَيَعْتَزِلُ الْحُيَّضُ عَنْ مُصَلاَّهُنَّ. قَالَتِ امْرَأَةٌ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، إِحْدَانَا لَيْسَ لَهَا جِلْبَابٌ. قَالَ " لِتُلْبِسْهَا صَاحِبَتُهَا مِنْ جِلْبَابِهَا[17]"

From Ummi 'Attiya, We were ordered to bring out our menstruating women and veiled women in the religious gatherings and invocation of Muslims on the two 'EId festivals. These menstruating women were to keep away from their Musalla. A woman asked, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)" What about one who does not have a Jilbab?" He said, "Let her share the Jilbab of her companion."

a. Observing Hijab

Linguistically, Hijab refers to a barrier or partition. We see the usage of this word in the verses: 7:46, 33:53, 38:32, 41:5, 42:51, 17:45 and 19:17. In all these verses, the word Hijab is used as a form of partition and not as a dress code. We can accordingly say that the Quran does not use the word Hijab to represent the head cover that Muslims refer to as the hijab. However, it has been explained that the common use of the word hijab which refers to head covering is also permissible, though it needs to be understood that the use of this word in Quran does not mention this meaning. The dress item that it commonly refers is more closely associated with the word Khimar, instead (which is explained above in the sub-section b).

The word hijab is used in a number of ahadith. However, it is unclear whether it is used in the sense of partition or to represent the face cover. It is mentioned:

"أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ أَقَامَ عَلَى صَفِيَّةَ بِنْتِ حُيَيٍّ، بِطَرِيقِ خَيْبَرَ ثَلاَثَةَ أَيَّامٍ، حَتَّى أَعْرَسَ بِهَا، وَكَانَتْ فِيمَنْ ضُرِبَ عَلَيْهَا الْحِجَابُ"[18]

The Prophet (ﷺ) stayed with Safiya bint Huyai for three days on the way of Khaibar where he consummated his marriage with her. Safiya was amongst those who were ordered to use a veil.

There is another hadith which describes the same event. In that hadith, there is an additional explanation about the hijab mentioned above. It contains the following wording:

"فَلَمَّا ارْتَحَلَ وَطَّى لَهَا خَلْفَهُ وَمَدَّ الْحِجَابَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ النَّاسِ"[19]

So when the Prophet (ﷺ) proceeded from there, he spared her a space

behind him (on his she-camel) and put a screening veil between her and the people.

This indicates that the hijab being discussed here was a physical barrier and not a piece of clothing. The hadith Sunan Abi Dawud (no. 2985) also signify the same meaning.

Another hadith that seems to favor this interpretation is as follows:

"مَوْلَى أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ أَنَّهُ حَدَّثَهُ أَنَّ أُمَّ سَلَمَةَ حَدَّثَتْهُ أَنَّهَا، كَانَتْ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ وَمَيْمُونَةُ قَالَتْ فَبَيْنَا نَحْنُ عِنْدَهُ أَقْبَلَ ابْنُ أُمِّ مَكْتُومٍ فَدَخَلَ عَلَيْهِ وَذَلِكَ بَعْدَ مَا أُمِرْنَا بِالْحِجَابِ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:احْتَجِبَا مِنْهُ. فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَلَيْسَ هُوَ أَعْمَى لاَ يُبْصِرُنَا وَلاَ يَعْرِفُنَا فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:أَفَعَمْيَاوَانِ أَنْتُمَا أَلَسْتُمَا تُبْصِرَانِهِ"[20]

Narrated the freed slave of Ummi Salamah that Umm Salamah narrated to him, that she and Maymunah were with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), she said: "So when we were with him, Ibn Umm Maktum came, and he entered upon him, and that was after veiling had been ordered for us. So, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Veil yourselves from him.' So, I said: 'O Messenger of Allah! Is he not blind such that he cannot see us or recognize us?' So the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Are you two blind such that you cannot see him?'

The prophet mentioned about a hijab because of which Umm Salamah R.A. and Maimunah R.A. also could not see him. This seems to be mentioning about a physical barrier too, rather than a dress item worn to cover head.

Another hadith supports the interpretation of the word hijab as a place:

"فقالا: السلام عليك ورحمة الله وبركاته، أندخل؟ قالت عائشة: ادخلوا، قالوا: كلنا؟ قالت: نعم ادخلوا كلكم، ولا تعلم أن معهما ابن الزبير، فلما دخلوا ، دخل ابن الزبير الحجاب، فاعتنق عائشة ﵂، وطفق يناشدها ويبكي"[21]

Al Salamu 'Alaika wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu, Shall we come in?" 'Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her) said: "Come in," They asked: "All of us?" She said: "All of you," not knowing that Ibn Az-Zubair was also with them. So, when they entered, Ibn Az-Zubair entered the screened place and got hold of 'Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her), his aunt. He was requesting her to forgive him and wept.

Also, the word hijab is used in the following hadith.

"قَالَ قَالَ عُمَرُ وَافَقْتُ رَبِّي فِي ثَلاَثٍ، فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَوِ اتَّخَذْنَا مِنْ مَقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى فَنَزَلَتْ {وَاتَّخِذُوا مِنْ مَقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى} وَآيَةُ الْحِجَابِ قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، لَوْ أَمَرْتَ نِسَاءَكَ أَنْ يَحْتَجِبْنَ، فَإِنَّهُ يُكَلِّمُهُنَّ الْبَرُّ وَالْفَاجِرُ. فَنَزَلَتْ آيَةُ الْحِجَابِ، وَاجْتَمَعَ نِسَاءُ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ فِي الْغَيْرَةِ عَلَيْهِ فَقُلْتُ لَهُنَّ عَسَى رَبُّهُ إِنْ طَلَّقَكُنَّ أَنْ يُبَدِّلَهُ أَزْوَاجًا خَيْرًا مِنْكُنَّ. فَنَزَلَتْ هَذِهِ الآيَةُ"[22]

Narrated `Umar (bin Al-Khattab): My Lord agreed with me in three things: I said, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), I wish we took the station of Abraham as our praying place (for some of our prayers). So came the Divine Inspiration: And take you (people) the station of Abraham as a

place of prayer (for some of your prayers e.g. two rak`at of Tawaf of Ka`ba)". And as regards the (verse of) the veiling of the women, I said, 'O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)! I wish you ordered your wives to cover themselves from the men because good and bad ones talk to them.' So the verse of the veiling of the women was revealed. -3. Once the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) made a united front against the Prophet (ﷺ) and I said to them, 'It may be if he (the Prophet) divorced you, (all) that his Lord (Allah) will give him instead of you wives better than you.' So this verse (the same as I had said) was revealed."

The word hijab is also used in other ahadith too.[23]

In some narration, having a partition is also referred to as Sitr (curtain) and is linked to the concept of hijab as a physical barrier. For example, consider the following hadith:

"---فَرَجَعَ وَرَجَعْتُ مَعَهُ فَإِذَا هُمْ قَدْ خَرَجُوا فَضَرَبَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَهُ بِالسِّتْرِ، وَأُنْزِلَ الْحِجَابُ"[24]

So he [the Prophet (ﷺ) returned and I too, returned along with him and found those people had left. Then the Prophet (ﷺ) drew a curtain between me and him [when he entered the house of his wife [Zainab bint Jahsh R.A.], and the Verses of Al-Hijab were revealed.

b. The wearing of Niqab:

One of the derivatives of the word Niqab is used in the ahadith.

" عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: "الْمُحْرِمَةُ لاَ تَنْتَقِبُ وَلاَ تَلْبَسُ الْقُفَّازَيْنِ[25]

The Prophet ﷺ said: A woman in the sacred state (wearing ihram) must not be veiled (on face) or wear gloves.

One can imply that if the niqab is prohibited specifically during the state of Ihram, then it means that women used to regularly wear them and they were asked not to during their ihram. That is why a group of Muslim scholars has considered it necessary for women to cover their face.

c. Wearing of Ad-Dir'a:

This type of clothing refers to a long shirt which covers the feet as well. We see a mention of it in a weak narration which is mentioned below:

"عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ زَيْدِ بْنِ قُنْفُذٍ، عَنْ أُمِّهِ، أَنَّهَا سَأَلَتْ أُمَّ سَلَمَةَ مَاذَا تُصَلِّي فِيهِ الْمَرْأَةُ مِنَ الثِّيَابِ فَقَالَتْ تُصَلِّي فِي الْخِمَارِ وَالدِّرْعِ السَّابِغِ الَّذِي يُغَيِّبُ ظُهُورَ قَدَمَيْهَا"[26]

Zaid b. Qunfudh said that his mother asked Umm Salamah: In how many clothes should a woman pray? She replied; she would pray wearing a Khimar and a long shirt which covers the surface of her feet.

d. Wearing of Al-Hudba:

The following hadith mentions the use of Hudba. It means the fringe of a garment (including veil):

"أَنَّ عَائِشَةَ . رضى الله عنها . زَوْجَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَتْ جَاءَتِ امْرَأَةُ رِفَاعَةَ الْقُرَظِيِّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ وَأَنَا جَالِسَةٌ وَعِنْدَهُ أَبُو بَكْرٍ فَقَالَتْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنِّي كُنْتُ تَحْتَ رِفَاعَةَ فَطَلَّقَنِي فَبَتَّ طَلاَقِي، فَتَزَوَّجْتُ بَعْدَهُ عَبْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنَ الزَّبِيرِ، وَإِنَّهُ وَاللَّهِ مَا مَعَهُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِلاَّ مِثْلُ هَذِهِ الْهُدْبَةِ"[27]

Narrated `Aisha: (the wife of the Prophet) the wife of Rifa`ah Al-Qurazi came to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) while I was sitting, and Abu Bakr was also there. She said, 'O Allah s Apostle! I was the wife of Rifa`ah and he divorced me irrevocably. Then I married `AbdurRahman bin Az-Zubair who, by Allah, O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), has only something like a fringe of a garment, showing the fringe of her veil.

e. Wearing of Izaar:

"فَجَعَلْتُ دِرْعِي فِي رَأْسِي وَاخْتَمَرْتُ وَتَقَنَّعْتُ إِزَارِي"[28]

I covered my head, put on my veil and tightened my waist wrapper.

In this hadith, we see the three words which represent the dress items.

- Dir'i (from دِّرْع which stands for a long shirt as described previously)
- Khimar (used in verb form)
- Idhari

In the other ahadith (for example, Adab al Mufrid Book 24, Hadith 20), the word Idhari is used as a shawl (which is another meaning of this word). The expression بَسَطَ طَرَفَ إِزَارِهِ (as used in a hadith of Saheeh Muslim - Book 11, Hadith 132) can also be interpreted to very clearly indicate this meaning. The expression is translated as "He spread the corner of his shawl".

So, it can be argued that the use of this word with regards to Aysha R.A. could mean another dress item e.g. shawl or a loose lower garment (which is another dictionary meaning for this word). The third meaning of this word (which is linked to the second meaning) is waste band which is used to set the garments in their place.

Now let us come to the word دِّرْع. In the hadith above, the word used after Dar'i is 'fi Ra'si'. Ra'si can mean head as well as the front of the body (الجزء الاعلى او الامامى من الجسم).

So it can be said in relation to the above hadith that it means that Ayesha R.A. wore her long dress and covered her body properly.

f. Use of Howdaj:

Howdaj refers to a veil carrier which was used by the mothers of the believer, Umahat ul Momineen during the travel. It mentioned in the ahadith in which Aysha R.A. explains her travel to a Ghazawah with Rasoolullah (ﷺ). She is reported to have said:

"وَذَلِكَ بَعْدَ مَا أُنْزِلَ الْحِجَابُ فَأَنَا أُحْمَلُ فِي هَوْدَجِي وَأُنْزَلُ فِيهِ مَسِيرَنَا[29]

This relates to the period when the revelation concerning the commands of veil had been made. I was carried in a haudaj and I was brought down where we had to stay.

Discussion:

In this paper, we have seen various forms of clothing that have been discussed in the Quran and Sunnah with regards to their use by women. The analysis of relevant Quranic verses and ahadith indicates that what is clearly

prescribed for women is the following:

- Lower their gaze to maintain modesty
- Cover their bodies with modest loose clothing that goes till their feet
- Wear an outer garment (commonly known as Jilbab) when they are outside
- Use Khimar to cover their heads and chests

Figure 1 provides an overview of the dress items for Muslim women that have been identified through the analysis of Quran and Sunnah:

Figure 1: The dress items for women identified from Quran and Sunnah

With regards to the covering of the face, there is disagreement among the scholars. There are opinions of notable scholars in the favor of both the opinions – observing it or not observing it. This, however, was a compulsory requirement for the mothers of believers who observed it either through a physical barrier (such as a curtain or howdej) or by other means (e.g. hiding behind a part of their jilbab when in Ihram). The previous Grand Imam of Al-Azhar University, Sheikh Mohammad Tantawi, expressed that "the traditional headscarf [hijab] is what is obligatory. This means covering the entire body except for the face and hands and wearing clothes that are neither tight nor transparent".[30] It is noteworthy that Allama Nasir ad Din Albani has also written a detailed account in this regard by the title "Jilbaab Al-Mira't Al-Muslimah" and opined that face veil is not mandatory. He presents numerous prophetic traditions to support this stance. Professor Alam[31] has analyzed these narrations and also added detailed commentary and explanations in the light of opinions of various mohaditheen and classical Muslim scholars. Our analysis also seems to support these opinions.

Conclusion:

In this article, we have compiled the relevant Quranic verses and prophetic traditions to analyze the dress code prescribed for Muslim women. Though Quranic verses only recommend the use of Khimar and Jilbab, hadith

indicates other dress items that were used by women to protect their modesty too. It is identified that what is mandatory is to use Khimar and Jilbab over as outer garments. It is also found that the commonly held connotation of the word hijab is not how it seems to appear in the Quran and Sunnah. It was used in the sense of a physical barrier (such as a curtain or a separate area) rather than a piece of clothing to be worn. The main debate regarding covering the face or not, stems from the interpretation of the word khimar and Jilbab (also including their verb forms). Sheikh Nasir ad-Din Albani and other notable scholars indicate that though it is better for women to cover their faces if they wish, it is not mandatory. Considering this opinion about the prescribed dressing, Muslim women, especially those living in the countries where face veil is considered illegal, can decide their course of action. This interpretation is based on the best of judgment and indeed Allah knows best.

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[12] Sunan Abi Daw'ud Ḥadith:641, Classified by Imam Albani as Ṣaḥiḥ.
[13] Sunan Abi Daw'ud, Ḥadith 4102, Classified by Imam Albani as Ṣaḥiḥ; The latter section of the above Ḥadith is also reported in Ṣaḥiḥ Al-Bukhari, Ḥadith 4759
[14] Ṣaḥiḥ al-Bukhari 3578
[15] Ṣaḥiḥ al-Bukhari Book 81, Ḥadith: 156, Ṣaḥiḥ al-Bukhari, Book 77, Ḥadith: 42, Ṣaḥiḥ al-Bukhari, Book 83, Ḥadith: 65)
[16] Al Qur'ān, 33:59.
[17]This requirement is narrated in a number of aḤadith: including Ṣaḥiḥ al-Bukhari Ḥadith: 324,980,1652; Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim, Book 8,Ḥadith: 12, Sunan Ibn Majah Book 5, Ḥadith: 1367, Jami' Tirmidhi, Book 5, Ḥadith: 10
[18] Ṣaḥiḥ al-Bukhari, Ḥadith: 4212.
[19] Ṣaḥiḥ al-Bukhari, Ḥadith: 5085.
[20]Jami' Al Tirmidhi, Book 43, Ḥadith: 3005. Classified as Ḥasan Ṣaḥiḥ.
[21] Ṣaḥiḥ al-Bukhari, Book 19, Ḥadith: 52
[22] Ṣaḥiḥ al-Bukhari, Ḥadith: 402
[23] For example, Ṣaḥiḥ al-Bukhari Ḥadith: 1618; Ṣaḥiḥ Bukhari, Ḥadith: 4213; Ṣaḥiḥ al-Bukhari, Ḥadith: 5085; Sunan Ibn Majah Book 19, Ḥadith: 2616; Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim, Ḥadith: 2170; Book 65, Ḥadith: 4790; Ṣaḥiḥ al-Bukhari, Ḥadith: 7421; Ṣaḥiḥ al-Bukhari, Ḥadith: 146; Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim, Ḥadith: 1445; Ṣaḥiḥ al-Bukhari, Ḥadith: 2644; Ṣaḥiḥ al-Bukhari, Ḥadith: 2879; Ṣaḥiḥ al-Bukhari, Ḥadith: 5103; Book 65, Ḥadith: 4758; Sunan Ibn Majah Book 9, Ḥadith: 2024; Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, Ḥadith: 1053; Ṣaḥiḥ al-Bukhari, Ḥadith: 6240; Ṣaḥiḥ al-Bukhari, Ḥadith: 3683; Shahi Bukhari Book 65, Ḥadith: 4483; Ṣaḥiḥ al-Bukhari, Ḥadith: 5239, 5466; Muw'aṭṭa Imam Malik Book 30, Ḥadith: 1276, 1277; Sunan an-Nasa'i 3487; Sunan Abi Daw'ud 4107; Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim 2181; Sunan an-Nasa'i 3484; Sunan Abi Daw'ud 2273; Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim 1428; Al-Adab Al-Mufrad 1051; Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim 1365; Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim 1457; Ṣaḥiḥ Bukhari Book 49, Ḥadith: 18; Ṣaḥiḥ Bukhari Book 65, Ḥadith: 4795; Ṣaḥiḥ Al-Bukhari Book 78, Ḥadith: 182; Ṣaḥiḥ al-Bukhari Book 93, Ḥadith: 45; Ṣaḥiḥ Bukhari Book 64, Ḥadith: 336; Muw'aṭṭa Book 36, Ḥadith 1424; Ṣaḥiḥ Al-Bukhari Book 78, and Ḥadith: 103).
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[26]Sunan Abi Daw'ud, Ḥadith: 639, classified as Ḍa'iyf Mawquwf by Imam Albani.
[27] Ṣaḥiḥ al-Bukhari, Book 67, Ḥadith: 5792.
[28] Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim, Book 11, Ḥadith: 132.
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